



Vol. 531 Rs. 25

Karna



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Karna

The Mahabharata is a gallery of heroes and Karna is the most heroic of them. Fate denied him all his dues. But he fought and achieved all that a man could aspire to have.

He was as much a Pandava prince as any of the other five. But he never knew his lineage. At last when he knew it, he could not but disown it.

He was brought up as a commoner and therefore humiliated. Teachers would not teach him. His equals shunned him. He received no honour despite his valour but he never lost heart. Duryodhana, the Kaurava prince, offered him kingship. For this act of kindness, he remained loyal to Duryodhana till the very end.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
Over 78 million copies sold so far.

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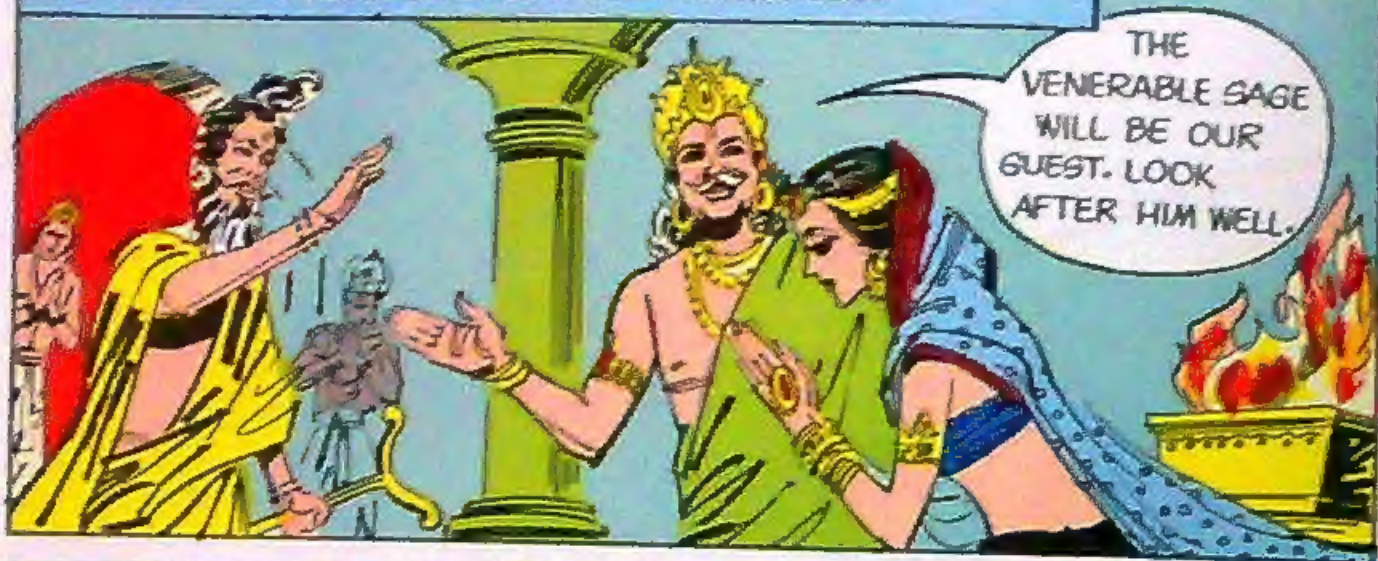
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Karna

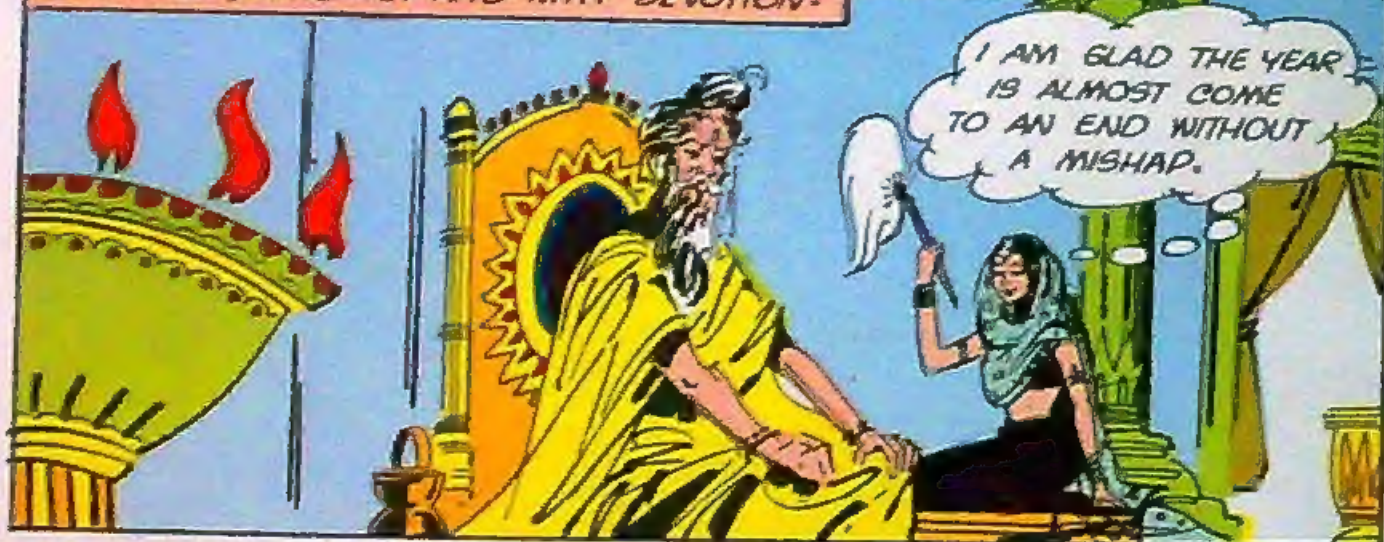


RAJA KUNTIBHOJA, OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS YADAVA RACE, HAD NO CHILDREN. SO HE ADOPTED PRITHA, HIS NIECE, AND CALLED HER KUNTI.

ONE DAY SAGE DURVASA, FEARED FOR HIS VIOLENT TEMPER AND HARD TO PLEASE, VISITED RAJA KUNTIBHOJA.



FOR A FULL YEAR KUNTI LOOKED AFTER THE SAGE CAREFULLY, PATIENTLY AND WITH DEVOTION.



AND DURVASA WAS WELL PLEASED.



AS SOON AS DURVASA LEFT -

I WONDER IF IT REALLY WORKS. OH! LORD SURYA SMILES AT ME. I WILL CALL HIM DOWN.



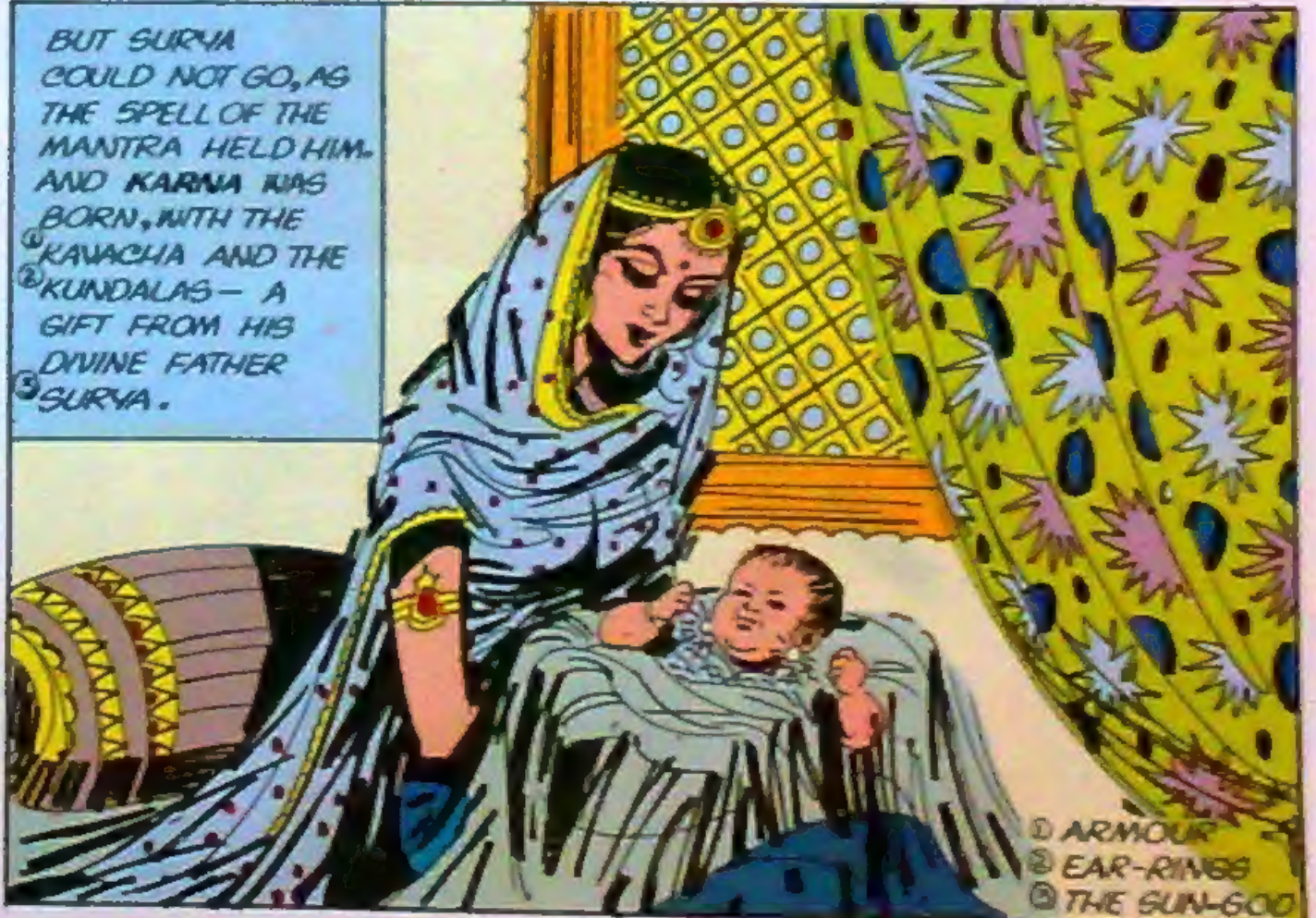
THE MANTRA OF COURSE WORKED.

YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU DESIRE.

BUT I AM NOT MARRIED. I WAS ONLY CURIOUS TO SEE IF YOU WOULD COME. PLEASE, PLEASE GO BACK.



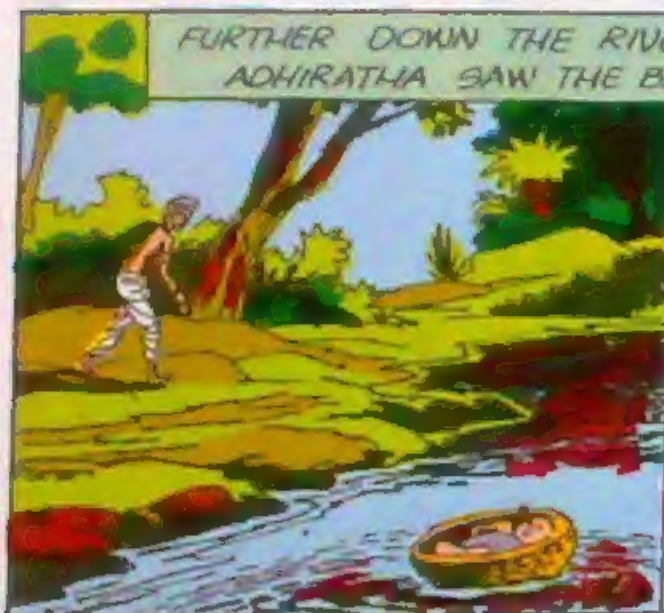
BUT SURYA COULD NOT GO, AS THE SPELL OF THE MANTRA HELD HIM. AND KARNA WAS BORN, WITH THE ① KAVACHA AND THE ② KUNDALAS - A GIFT FROM HIS DIVINE FATHER ③ SURYA.



① ARMOUR
② EAR-RINGS
③ THE SUN-GOD



FURTHER DOWN THE RIVER A CHILDLESS CHARIOTEER ADHIRATHA SAW THE BASKET AND LOOKED INTO IT.



AH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CHILD, ABANDONED BY SOME HEARTLESS MOTHER, NO DOUBT.



HE TOOK THE CHILD HOME TO HIS WIFE, RADHA.

LET US CALL HIM VASUSHENA OF THE KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.

HE SHALL BE RADHEYA, DEAR WIFE - RADHEYA THE SON OF RADHA.



KARNA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD
WAS A HAPPY ONE.



KUNTI MEANWHILE HAD MARRIED
KING PANDU OF HASTINAPURA,
WHO RULED THE KINGDOM FOR
HIS BLIND BROTHER
DHRTARASHTRA.



BUT KING PANDU BECAUSE OF A
CURSE COULD NOT HAVE CHILDREN.
SO HE RETIRED WITH HIS TWO
QUEENS, KUNTI AND MADRI, TO A
QUIET LIFE IN THE HIMALAYAS.



BUT ONE DAY -

DEAREST ONE,
HOW I SORROW
WHEN I SEE
YOUR CHILDLESS
STATE!

DO NOT
GRIEVE, MY LORD
I KNOW
OF A WAY OUT
BUT I HAVE NOT
TOLD YOU
ABOUT IT.



WITH THE HELP OF THE MANTRA, KUNTI AND MADRI HAD FIVE SONS IN ALL - THE PANDAVA PRINCES.



WHEN PANDU DIED, MADRI BURNT HERSELF ON THE FUNERAL PYRE. KUNTI TOOK THE FIVE PRINCES, YUDHISHTHIRA (SON OF DHARMA), BHEEMA (SON OF VAYU), ARJUNA (SON OF INDRA), NAKULA AND SAHADEVA (SONS OF THE ASVINI TWINS), TO HASTINAPURA.

REVERED UNCLE BHEESHMA, AND WISE VIDURA, I LEAVE THE FATHERLESS SONS OF PANDU IN YOUR CARE.

THE PANDAVA PRINCES SHALL BE BROUGHT UP, AS THE HEIRS OF PANDU, ALONG WITH THEIR COUSINS THE KAURAVAS.



FROM THE BEGINNING A BITTER RIVALRY SPRANG UP BETWEEN THE COUSINS. THE MAURAVA PRINCES WERE UNHAPPY.

OUR COUSINS HAVE COME AND SPOILT OUR LIFE.

BHEEMA TORMENTS ME ON THE PLAYGROUND AND HAUNTS MY DREAMS.



AND KARNA WHO OFTEN CAME TO HASTINAPURA WATCHED.

BHEEMA IS UNFAIR! POOR DURYODHANA.



DRONACHARVA, MASTER IN THE PRINCELY ARTS, TAUGHT THE PRINCES.

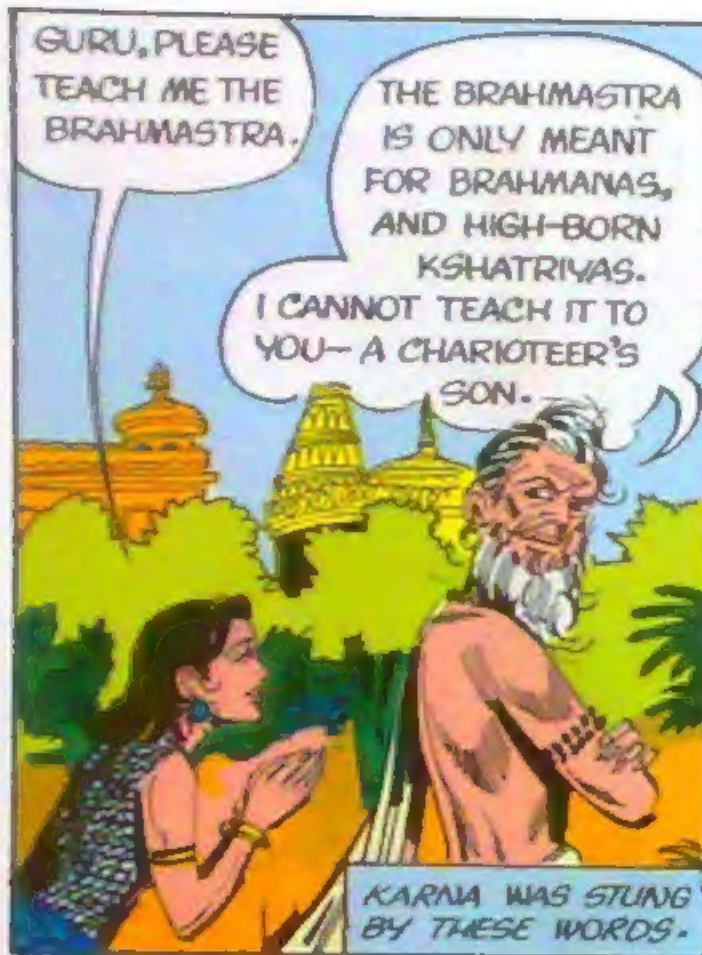
ARJUNA'S SKILL IN ARCHERY IS UNWATCHED BY ANY OF US. I FEAR THOSE PRINCES WILL RULE US ONE DAY.



KARNA TOO BECAME HIS PUPIL. BUT—

HE IS PARTIAL TO ARJUNA. HE WILL NEVER LET ME SURPASS HIM.



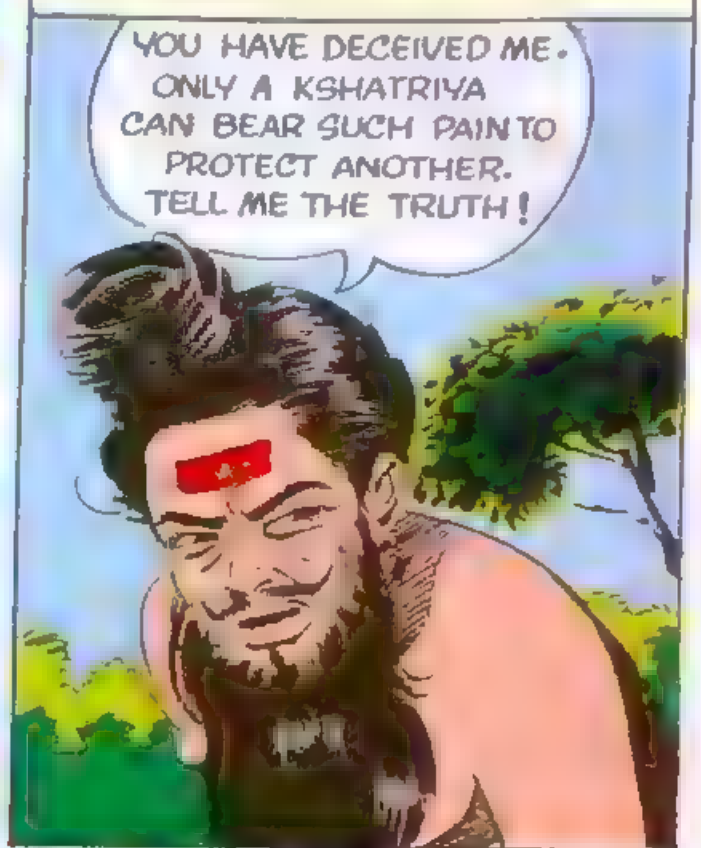


THEN ONE DAY WHILE PARASHURAMA
WAS RESTING WITH HIS HEAD ON
KARNA'S LAP -



AH! HOW THE LITTLE
INSECT STINGS. BUT
I WILL NOT DISTURB
YOUR REST, BELOVED
MASTER. SLEEP ON.

WHEN THE SAGE WOKE UP AND SAW
THE BLOOD -



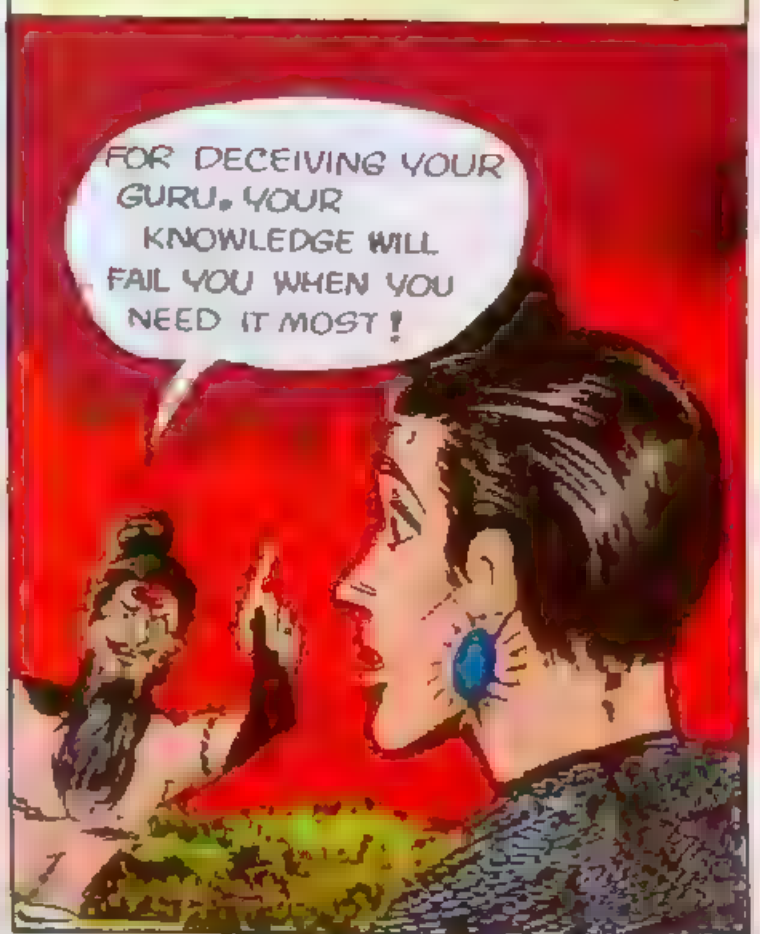
YOU HAVE DECEIVED ME.
ONLY A KSHATRIYA
CAN BEAR SUCH PAIN TO
PROTECT ANOTHER.
TELL ME THE TRUTH!

KARNA CONFESSED.



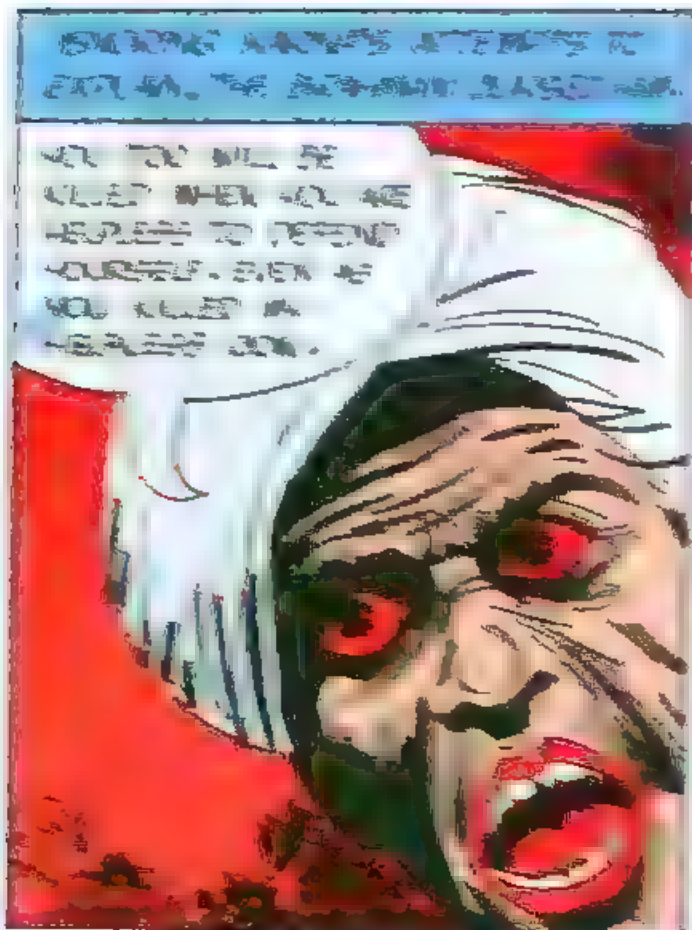
I AM THE SON OF
ADHIRATHA,
THE CHARIOTEER,
A SUTAPUTRA.
FORGIVE ME, SIR.

THE ENRAGED SAGE CURSED KARNA.



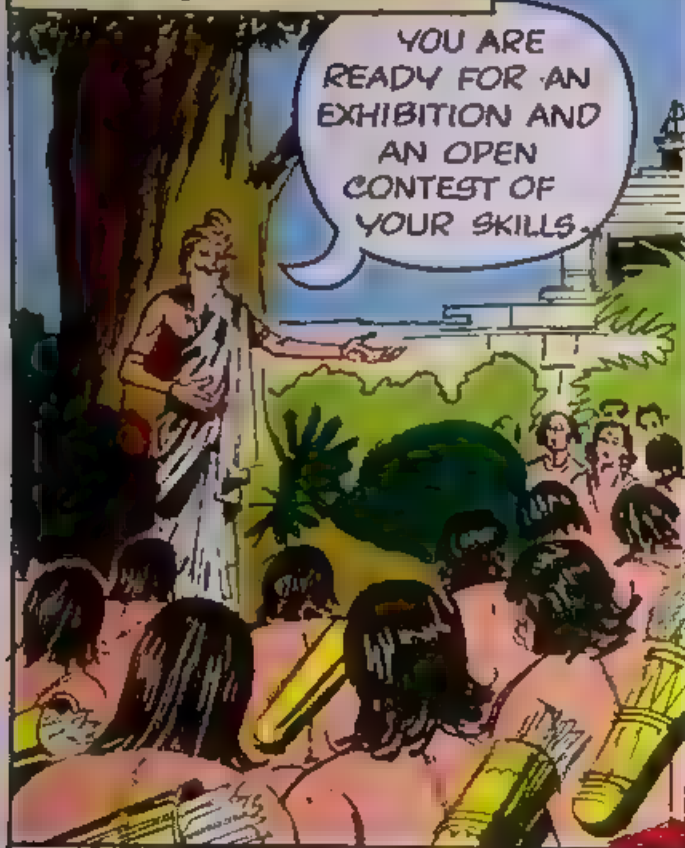
FOR DECEIVING YOUR
GURU, YOUR
KNOWLEDGE WILL
FAIL YOU WHEN YOU
NEED IT MOST!





WHAT KARNA HAD HEARD
WAS TRUE.

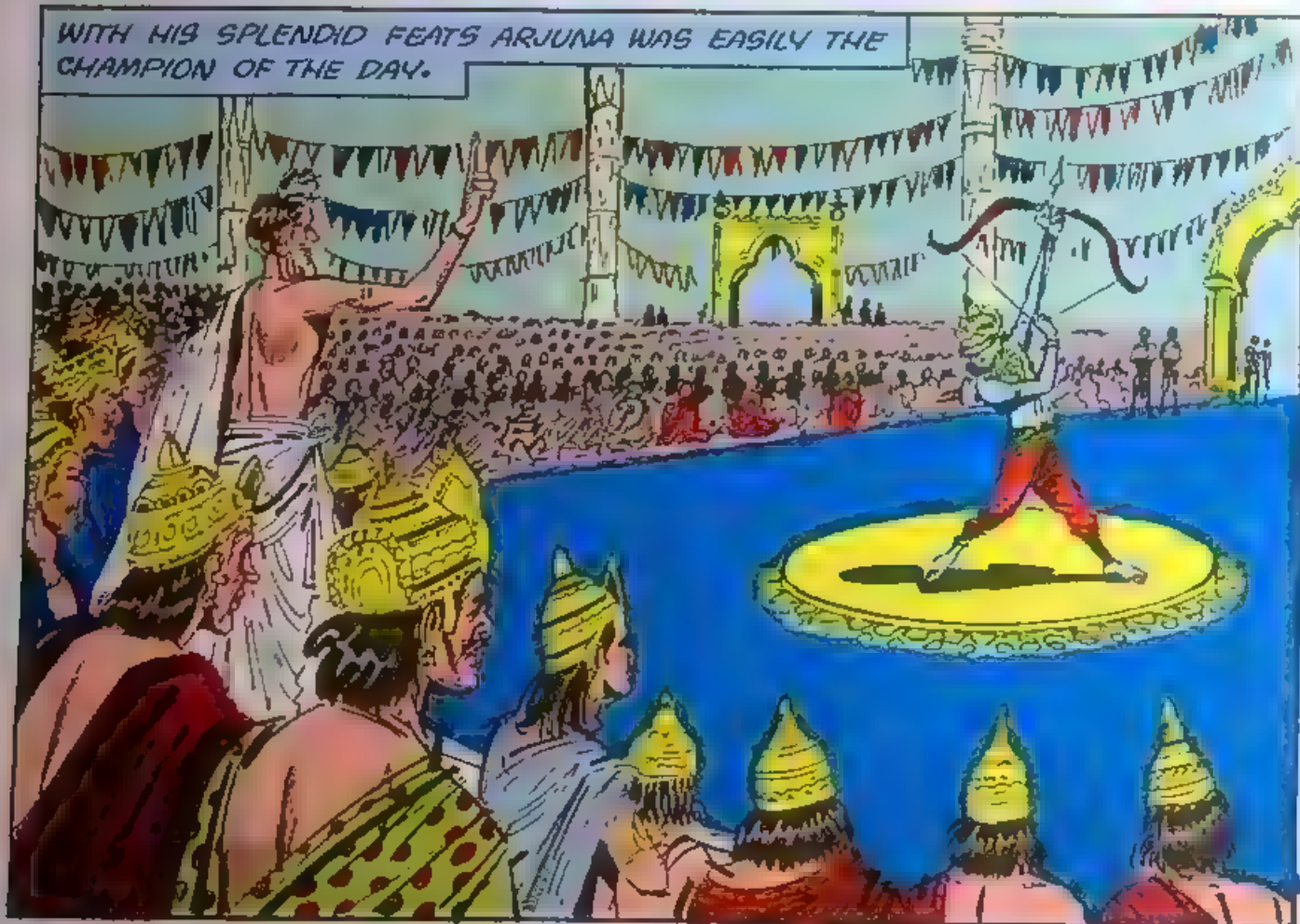
YOU ARE
READY FOR AN
EXHIBITION AND
AN OPEN
CONTEST OF
YOUR SKILLS.



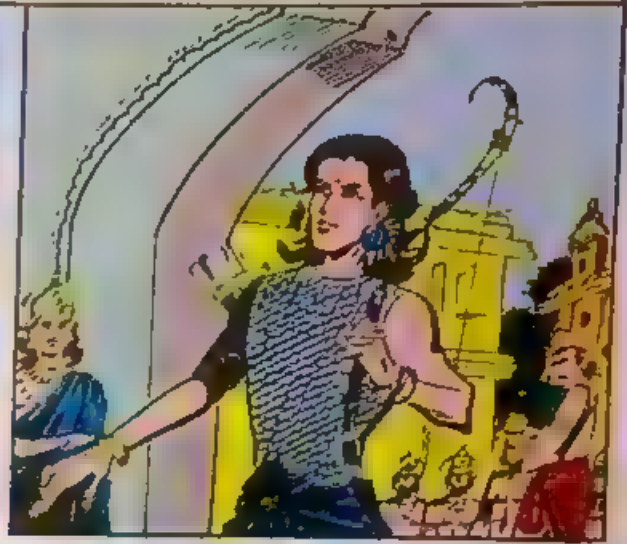
AFTER A CONSULTATION WITH THE
KURU ELDERS, THE DAY WAS FIXED.



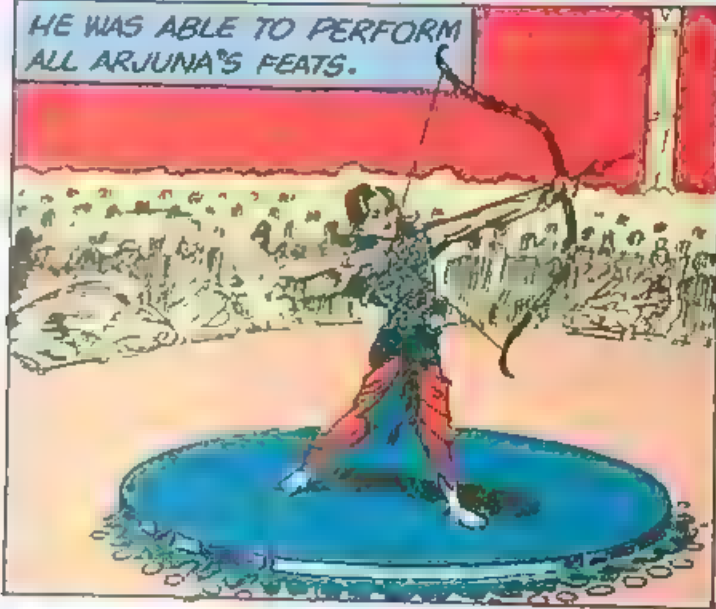
WITH HIS SPLENDID FEATS ARJUNA WAS EASILY THE
CHAMPION OF THE DAY.

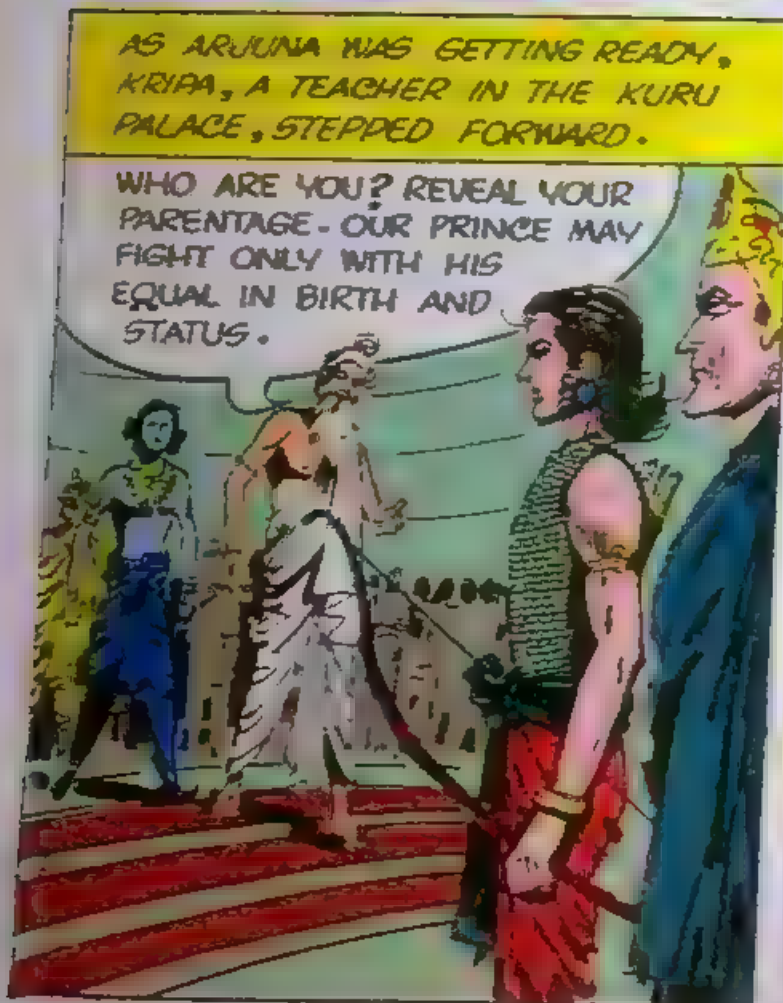
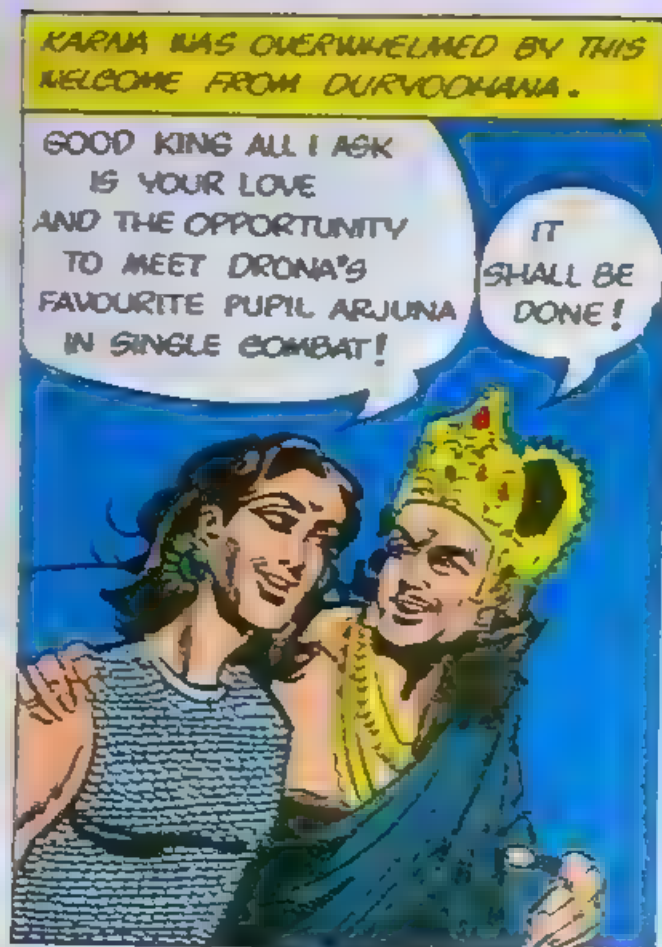


SUDDENLY THERE WAS A COMMOTION AND ALL EYES WERE TURNED TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE. A FIGURE ENTERED ON THE SCENE—IT WAS KARNA.

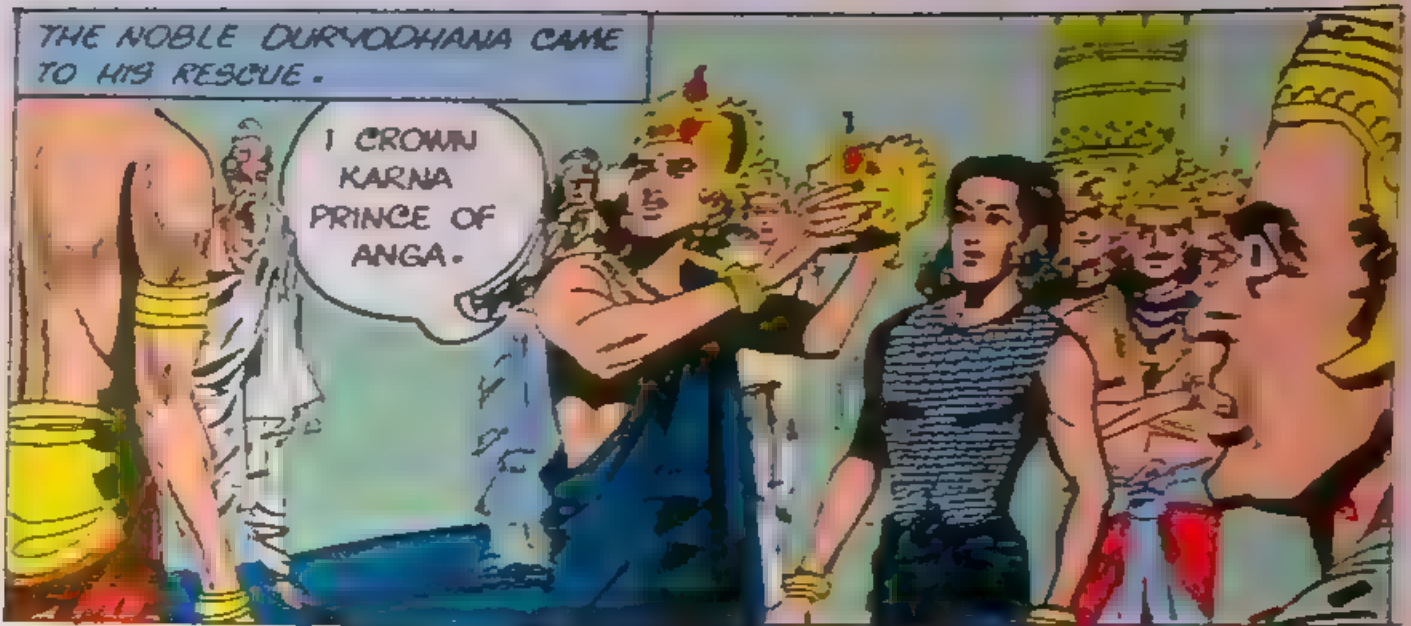


HE WAS ABLE TO PERFORM ALL ARJUNA'S FEATS.



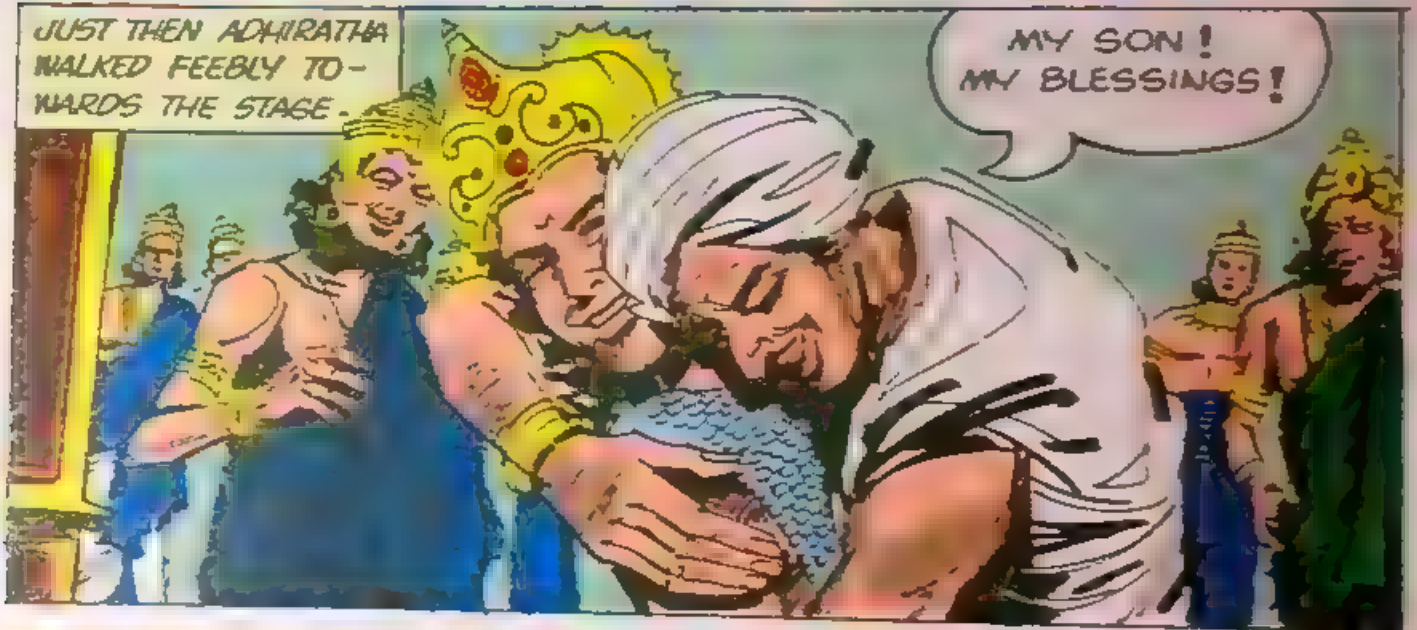


THE NOBLE DURYODHANA CAME
TO HIS RESCUE.



I CROWN
KARNA
PRINCE OF
ANGA.

JUST THEN ADHIRATHA
WALKED FEEBLY TO-
WARDS THE STAGE.



MY SON!
MY BLESSINGS!

BHEEMA SUDDENLY ROARED
WITH AMUSEMENT.

GO SUTAPUTRA! GO
DRIVE YOUR CHARIOT!
YOU ARE NOT
WORTHY OF
DEATH AT
ARJUNA'S
HANDS.



DURYODHANA COULD HARDLY
CONTAIN HIS ANGER AS HE LED
KARNA AWAY FROM THE HUMI-
LIATING SCENE.



COME KARNA!
IT TAKES A HERO
TO RECOGNISE
A HERO!

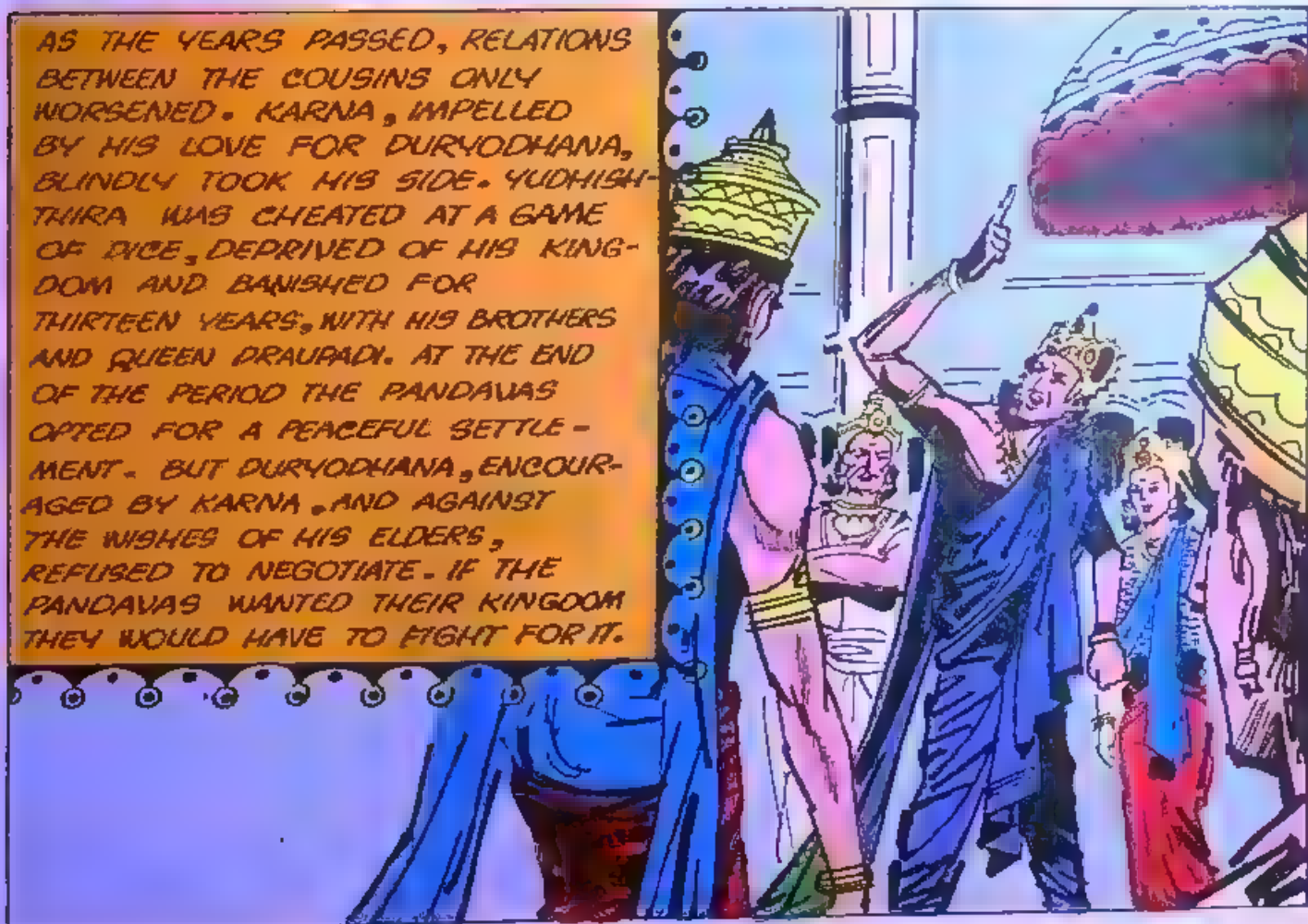
AS THEY DROVE AWAY IN DURYODHANA'S CHARIOT-

IT IS STRANGE!
I FEEL SAFE
FROM THE
PANDAVAS, ALREADY.
WHAT POWER
DOES THIS KARNA
HAVE THAT MAKES
ME FEEL SO?

DURYODHANA YOU HAVE NOT
BEFRIENDED ME IN VAIN. I WILL
KILL ARJUNA IN SINGLE
COMBAT ONE DAY!
I WILL!



AS THE YEARS PASSED, RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE COUSINS ONLY
WORSENEED. KARNA, IMPELLED
BY HIS LOVE FOR DURYODHANA,
BLINDLY TOOK HIS SIDE. YUDHISH-
THIRA WAS CHEATED AT A GAME
OF DICE, DEPRIVED OF HIS KING-
DOM AND BANISHED FOR
THIRTEEN YEARS, WITH HIS BROTHERS
AND QUEEN DRAUPADI. AT THE END
OF THE PERIOD THE PANDAVAS
OPTED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLE-
MENT. BUT DURYODHANA, ENCOUR-
AGED BY KARNA, AND AGAINST
THE WISHES OF HIS ELDERS,
REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE. IF THE
PANDAVAS WANTED THEIR KINGDOM
THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT.



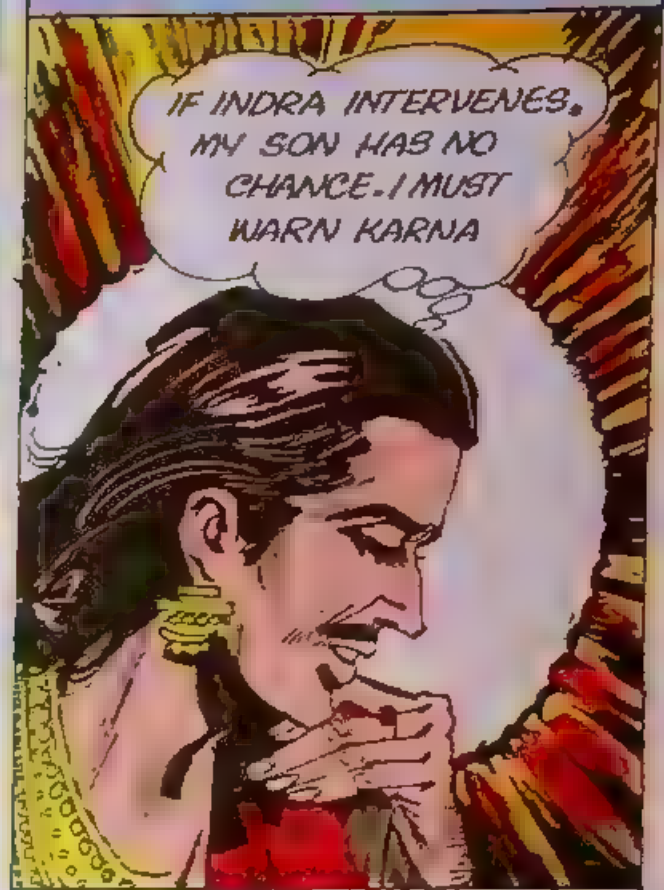
IN THE HEAVENS INDRA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ARJUNA...

IF KARNA IS DEPRIVED OF HIS KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS, MY SON ARJUNA NEED FEAR NO MORTAL!



...AND SURYA ABOUT KARNA.

IF INDRA INTERVENES, MY SON HAS NO CHANCE. I MUST WARN KARNA



SURYA TRIED TO WARN HIS SON IN A DREAM.

LORD INDRA WILL TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GENEROSITY. DO NOT PART WITH YOUR KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS



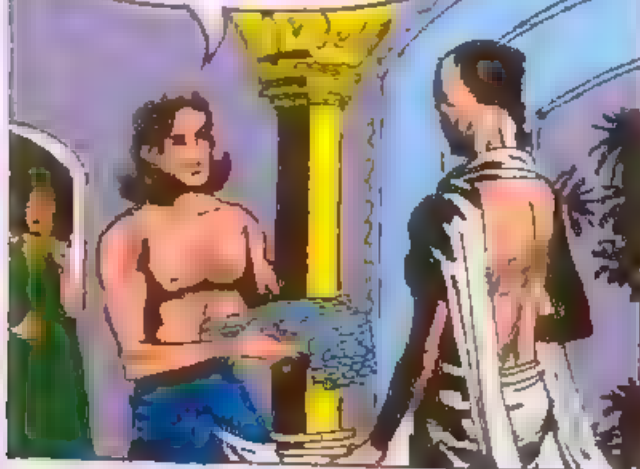
INDRA APPROACHED KARNA IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMAN.

I BEG FOR ALMS. KARNA, IT IS SAID, REFUSES NOTHING TO THOSE WHO ASK. I WANT YOUR KAVACHA AND KUNDALAS.



DISMISS SURYA'S WARNINGS.
KARNA, THE GENEROUS, PARTED
WITH THE KAWACHA AND KUNDALA'S.

MY LORD, I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE AND WHY YOU
ARE HERE. YET, I GIVE
TO YOU MY VERY LIFE.
NEVER LET IT BE SAID
THAT KARNA REFUSED
ANYONE ANYTHING.



INDRA WAS TOUCHED.

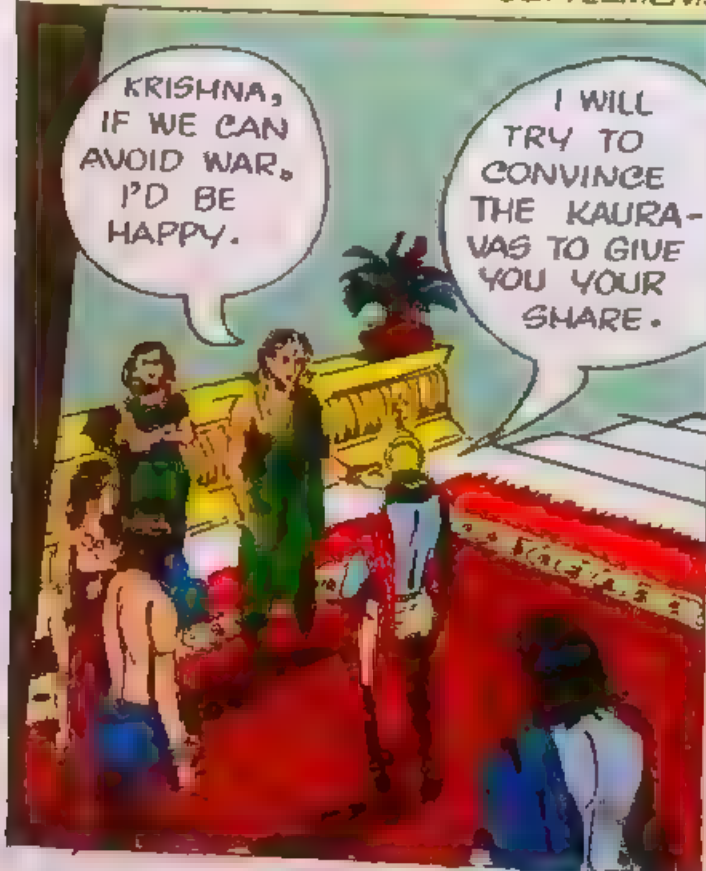
IN RETURN
I GRANT YOU MY
MASTER WEAPON
SHAKTI, BUT YOU MAY
USE IT ONLY ONCE.



THE PANDAVAS MEANWHILE STILL
HOPED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

KRISHNA,
IF WE CAN
AVOID WAR,
I'D BE
HAPPY.

I WILL
TRY TO
CONVINCE
THE KAURA-
VAS TO GIVE
YOU YOUR
SHARE.



KRISHNA WENT TO HASTINAPURA.
BUT -

I HAVE FAILED!
DURYODHANA IS
BENT UPON WAR.
HE DEPENDS ON
KARNA TO WIN IT FOR
HIM. IT IS TIME KARNA
KNEW THE TRUTH
ABOUT HIS
BIRTH.



KRISHNA WENT TO KARNA AND TOLD HIM THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH. WHEN HE FINISHED —

COME WITH ME. I WILL MAKE YOU A GREAT EMPEROR. YOU WILL HAVE FIVE POWERFUL BROTHERS AND A MOTHER WHO LONGS FOR YOU.



KARNA WAS IN A TERRIBLE PREDICAMENT.

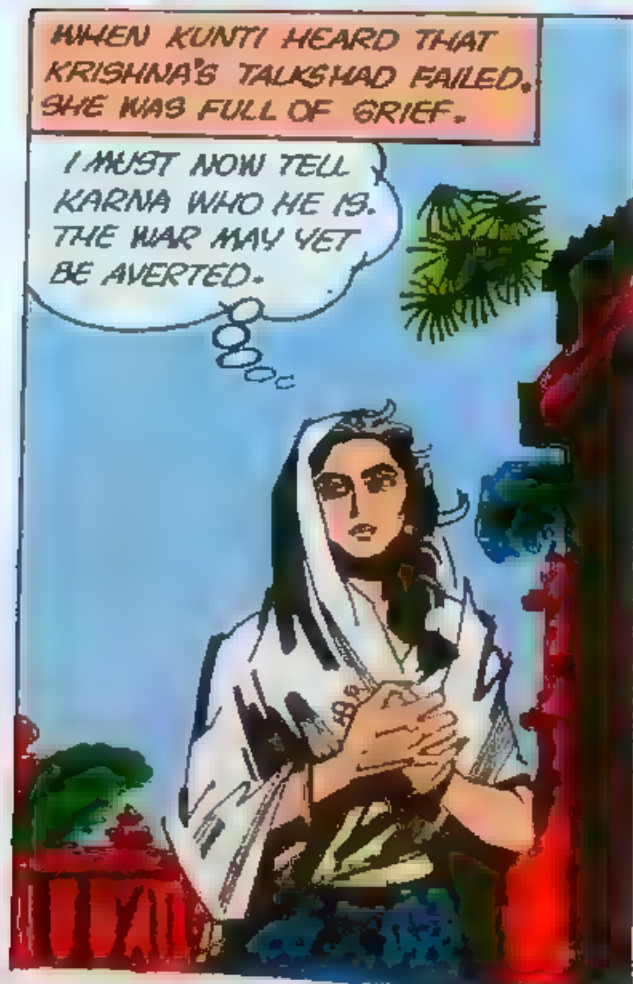
DURYODHANA'S LOVE IS WHAT I VALUE MOST IN MY LIFE. SO IF YOU REALLY HAVE MY INTEREST AT HEART PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL KEEP THE SECRET OF MY BIRTH TILL I DIE.

I WILL!



WHEN KUNTI HEARD THAT KRISHNA'S TALKSHAD FAILED, SHE WAS FULL OF GRIEF.

I MUST NOW TELL KARNA WHO HE IS. THE WAR MAY YET BE AVERTED.



SHE WENT TO KARNA WHEN HE WAS AT THE END OF HIS MIDDAY PRAYERS.

MY MOTHER! HERE! WHAT CAN SHE WANT?

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, O QUEEN?



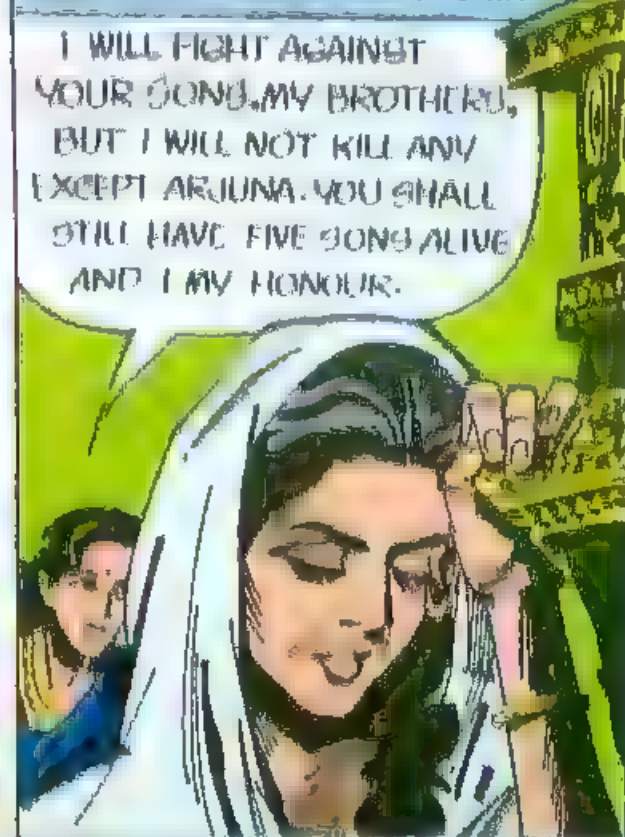
...AND WENT TO KARNATA THE
...THE ... AND ...
... ...



GET, EVEN LORD
KURMA, YOUR
FATHER, JOINED
ME IN MY REQUEST.

MOTHER,
WHAT YOU ASK
ME TO DO IS
AGAINST MY
DHARMA.

BUT HE WOULD NOT LET HIS
MOTHER'S PLEAS GO ANY FURTHER.



I WILL FIGHT AGAINST
YOUR SONS, MY BROTHERS,
BUT I WILL NOT KILL ANY
EXCEPT ARJUNA. YOU SHALL
STILL HAVE FIVE SONS ALIVE
AND I MY HONOUR.

ARJUNA FULFILLED KARNATA AND LEFT
... ...



... ...
... ...




BHISHMA HAS NEVER LIKED
ME, AND I WILL NOT TAKE
ORDERS FROM HIM.
I WILL ENTER
THE FIELD ONLY
WHEN HE HAS
FALLEN.

AND SO THE BATTLE OF KURUKSHETRA
BECAME A REALITY. IT LASTED FOR
24 LONG DAYS. MANY VALIANT MEN
WERE LOST ON EITHER SIDE. THE
VENERABLE COMMANDER BHISHMA,
OF THE KAURAWA ARMIES, FELL ON THE
TENTH DAY. HE FELL ON A BED OF
ARROWS - STICKING OUT FROM HIS
OWN ARMOUR. KARNA HAD ALWAYS
LONGED FOR THE GRANDFATHER'S
LOVE. WHEN HE HEARD THAT HE
LAY WOUNDED, KARNA RUSHED TO
THE SPOT.


MY LORD!
I HAVE NEVER BEEN
FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO
BE LIKED BY YOU. YET I
HAVE COME TO PAY MY
RESPECTS TO YOU AND
TO ASK FOR YOUR
BLESSINGS.






DEAR KARNA! I KNEW WHO YOU WERE.
YOUR FIRM LOYALTY TO DURYODHANA
IS YOUR CHOSEN DHARMA. MAY
YOU LEAD HIS FORCES TO
VICTORY! GO FIGHT YOUR
FATED ENEMIES.

IN A HURRIED COUNCIL, IT WAS DECIDED
THAT DRONA SHOULD NOW COMMAND
THE KAURAVA FORCES.

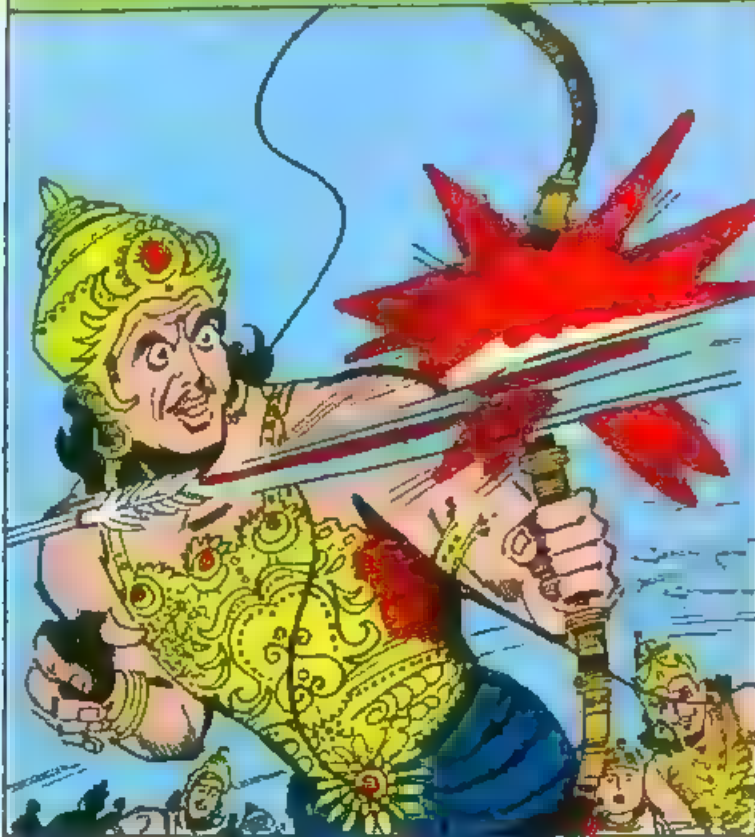


I DID HOPE THAT
YOU WOULD
LEAD US,
KARNA.

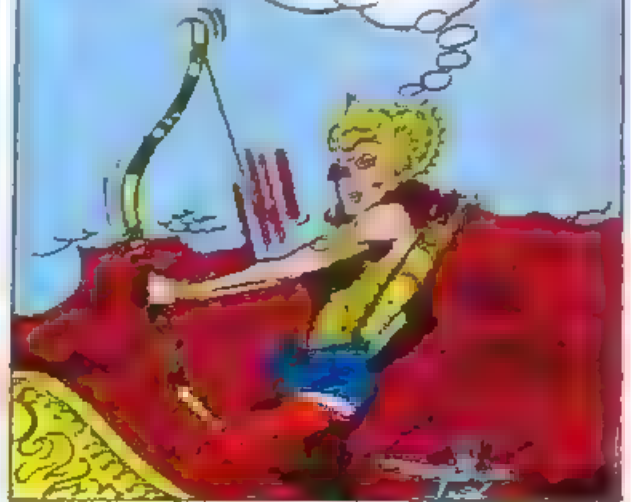


IT IS BEST THAT
DRONA LEAD US. LET
THERE BE NO
JEALOUSY AMONG
OUR HEROES AT
THIS STAGE.

AND SO THE BATTLE RAGED ON. IT WAS THE FOURTEENTH DAY. KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN FIGHTING BHEEMA. KARNA COULD EASILY HAVE KILLED HIM, BUT -

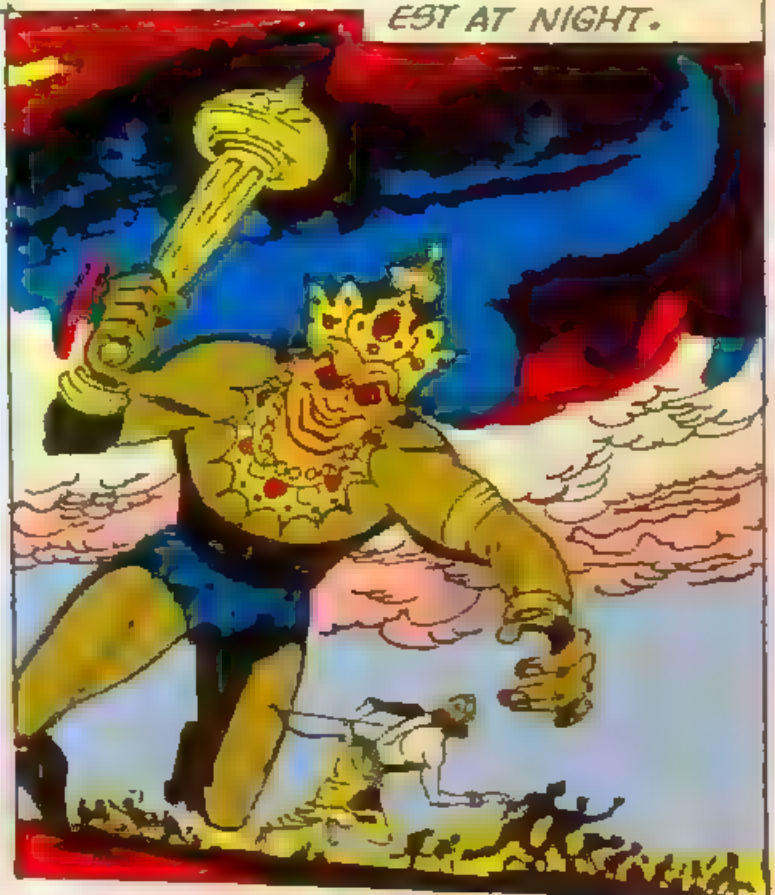


FORGIVE ME, DURYODHANA. I HAVE BHEEMA AT MY MERCY BUT I CANNOT KILL HIM. I HAVE PROMISED MY MOTHER - AH! ARJUNA COMES TO DEFEND BHEEMA. I AM LUCKY.

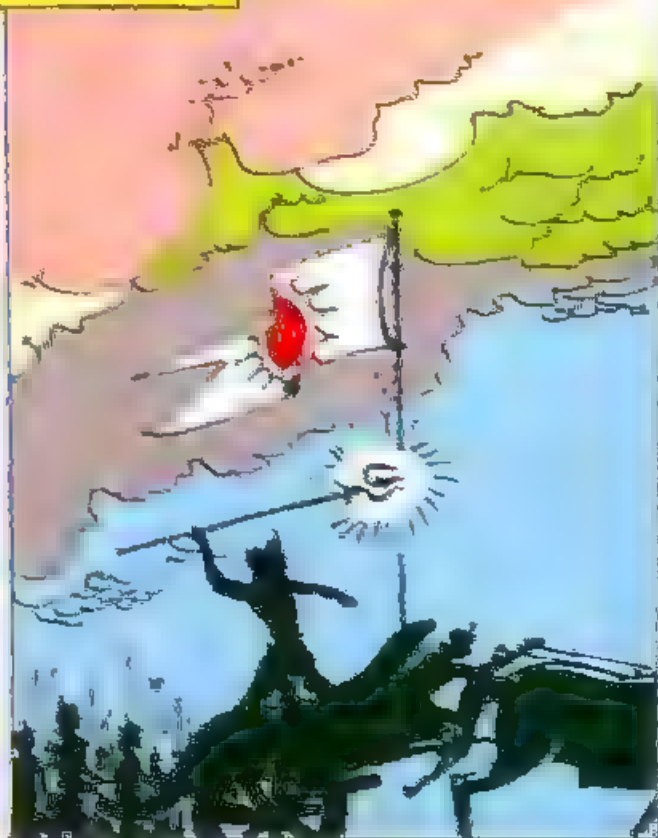
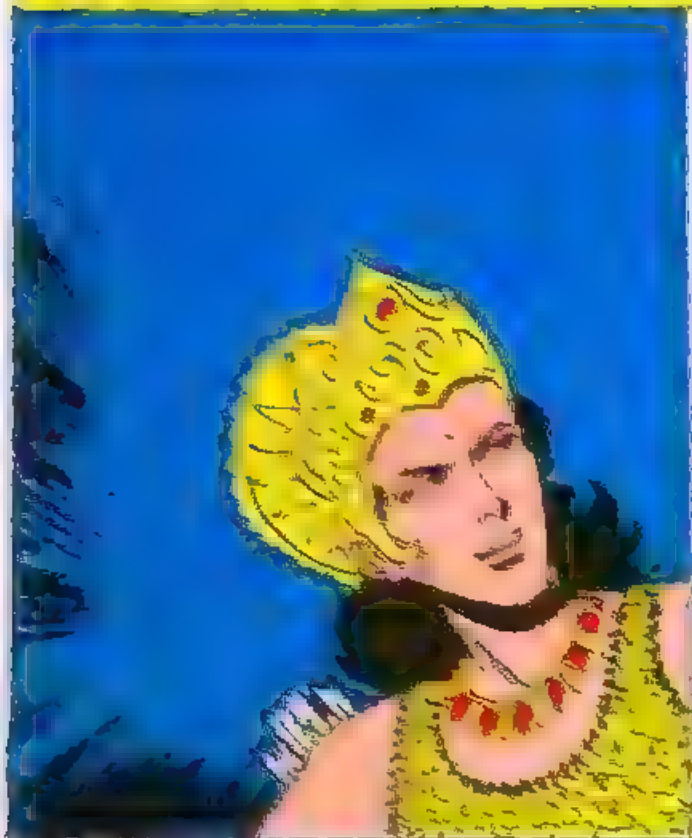


THAT DAY THE BATTLE CONTINUED INTO THE NIGHT. THIS WAS LUCKY FOR BHEEMA'S SON GHATOTKACHA AND HIS RAKSHASA FORCES, FOR RAKSHASAS ARE STRONGEST AT NIGHT.

KILL THAT FELLOW IMMEDIATELY, KARNA. OR ELSE OUR WHOLE ARMY WILL BE VANQUISHED.



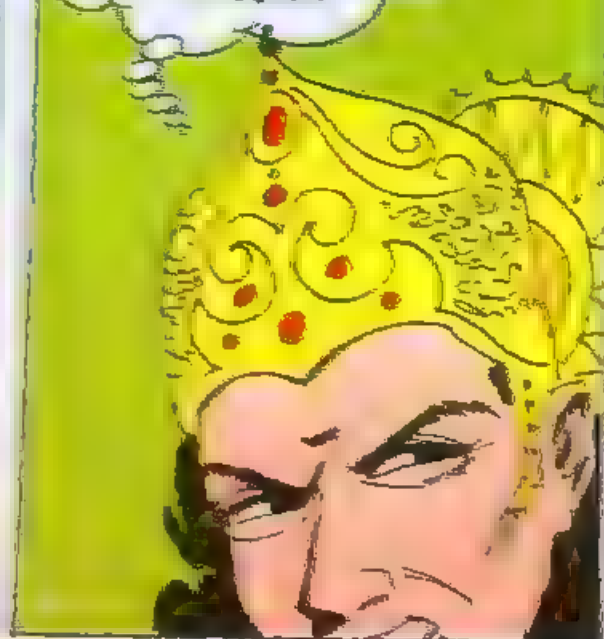
HE WOUNDED ARJUNA. IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, FORGOT HIMSELF AND USED
THE MIGHTY SHAKTI - THE WEAPON OF ARJUNA.



ONLY MORE THE WARS HAD SMILED ON
THE FAVOURED ARJUNA.



ALAS! I HAVE KILLED
GHATOTKACHA BUT
I HAVE LOST THE
MIGHTIEST WEAPON -
SHAKTI WHICH I HAD
MEANT TO USE ON
ARJUNA.



ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE, DURYODHANA WAS SLAIN AND THE KAUDARA HEROES SPoke AS ONE IN FAVOUR OF KARNA AS THEIR NEXT COMMANDER.

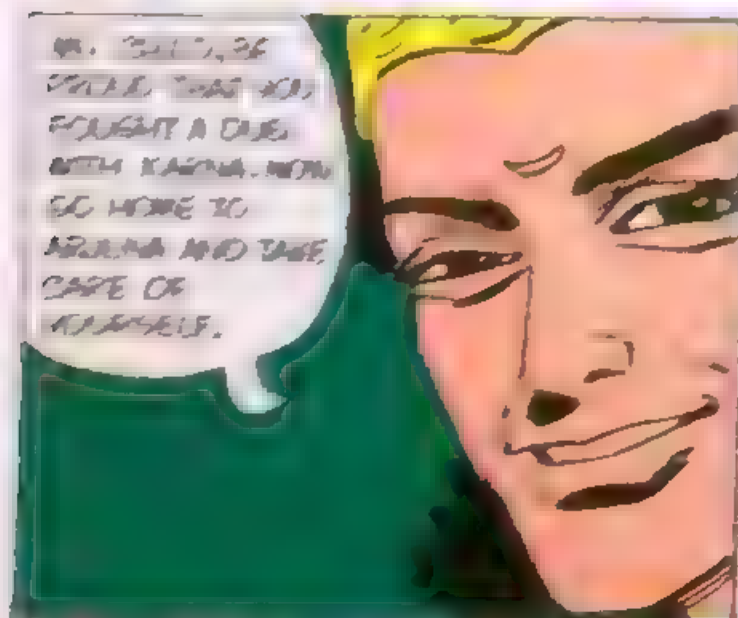
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KARNA SHALL BE THE COMMANDER OF OUR FORCES.

DURYODHANA WAS PLEASED.

KARNA, YOU HATE THE PANDAVAS AS MUCH AS I DO. I AM SURE OF OUR VICTORY NOW.

KARNA WAS GLAD THAT HE COULD AT LAST REPLY HIS BELOVED KING.

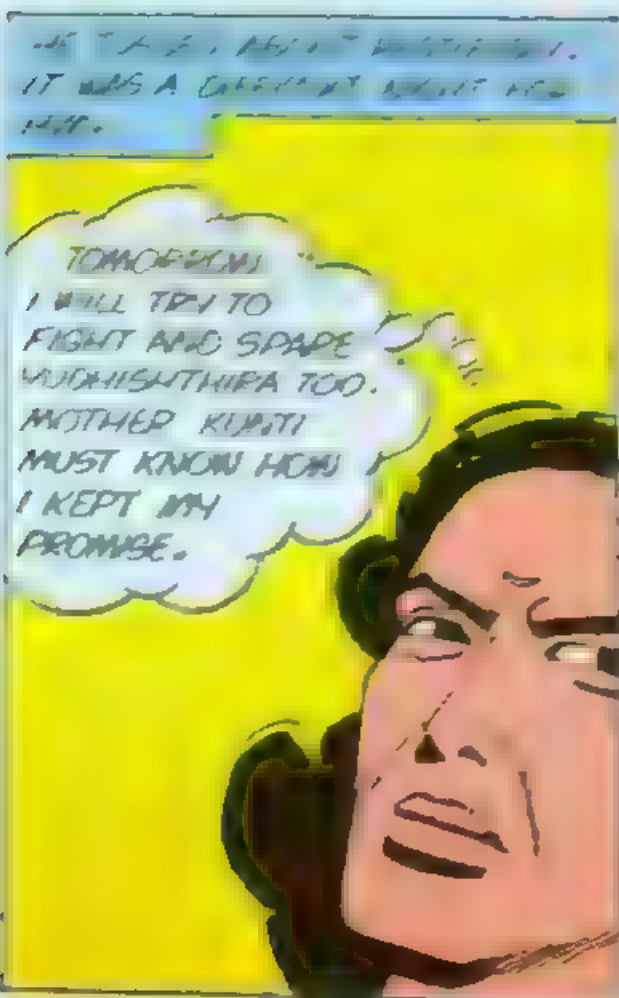
I WILL LEAD OUR FORCES TO VICTORY, MY KING! ARJUNA SHALL DIE AT MY HANDS.





THEY WERE THE ONLY TWO
WHO WERE NOT DEAD.
THEY WERE THE ONLY TWO
WHO WERE NOT DEAD.

TOMORROW, I WILL TRY TO
FIGHT AND SPARE
WIDHISNTHIRA TOO.
MOTHER KIRITI
MUST KNOW HOW
I KEPT MY
PROMISE.



THE "A. S. H. I." WERE THE
IT WAS A CURENT WERE THE
THE.

TOMORROW
I WILL TRY TO
FIGHT AND SPARE
WIDHISNTHIRA TOO.
MOTHER KIRITI
MUST KNOW HOW
I KEPT MY
PROMISE.



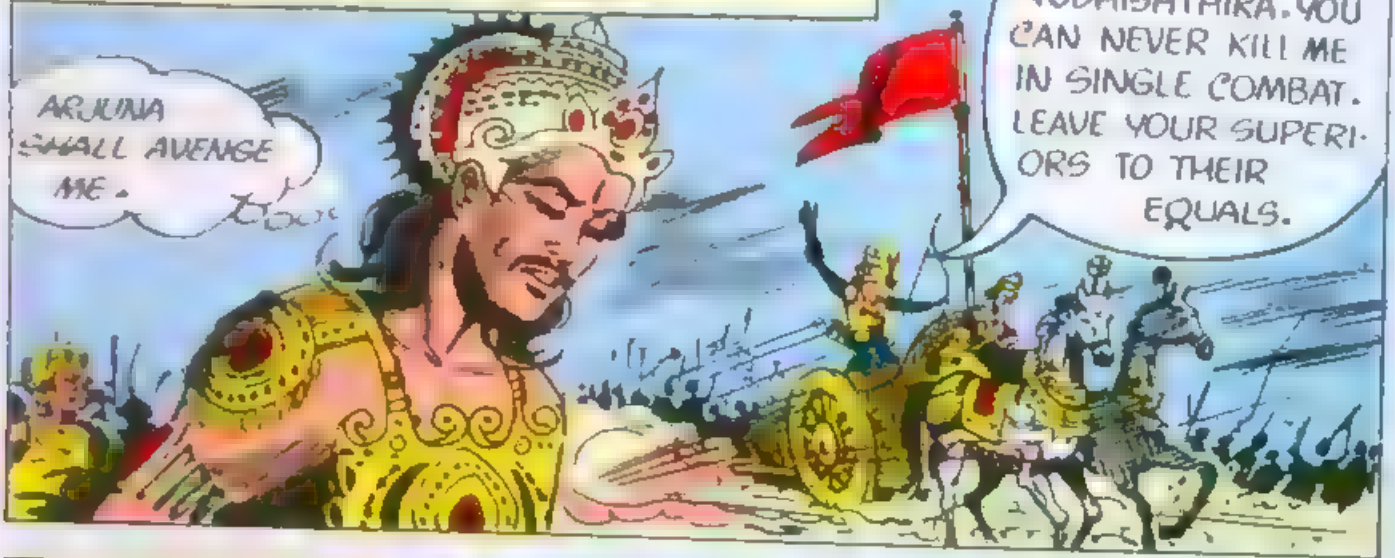
THEY WERE THE ONLY TWO
WHO WERE NOT DEAD!
AND IN THESE MOMENTS,
THEY WERE THE
SCARDEST LOVE OF MOTHER
KIRITI AND MY MOTHER
DURAND.

THIS WAS THE ONLY
LOVED ONE TO BE.

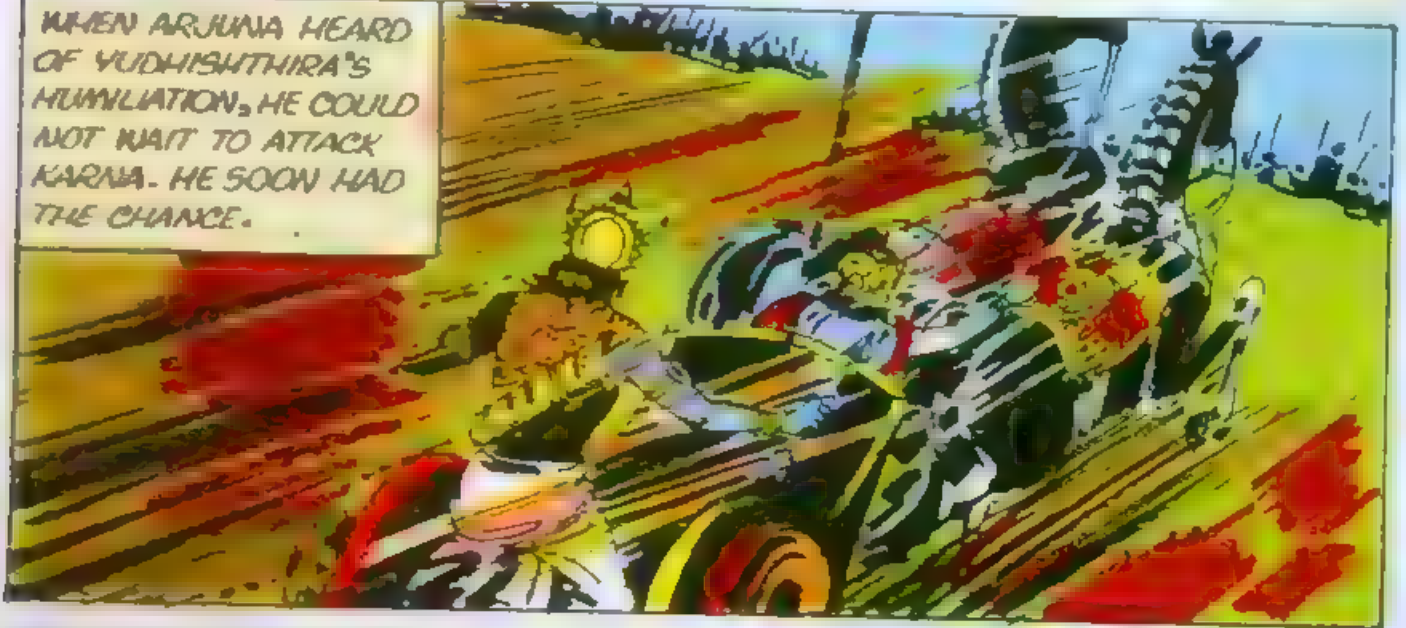
THE NEXT DAY KARNA HAD HIS WISH TO ENGAGE YUDHISHTHIRA IN SINGLE COMBAT.

ARJUNA
SHALL AVENGE
ME.

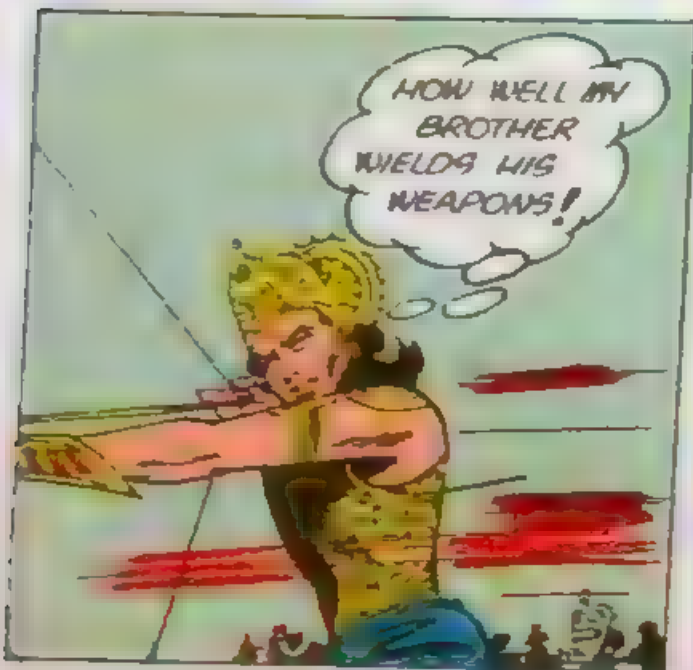
I SPARE YOUR LIFE,
YUDHISHTHIRA. YOU
CAN NEVER KILL ME
IN SINGLE COMBAT.
LEAVE YOUR SUPERI-
ORS TO THEIR
EQUALS.



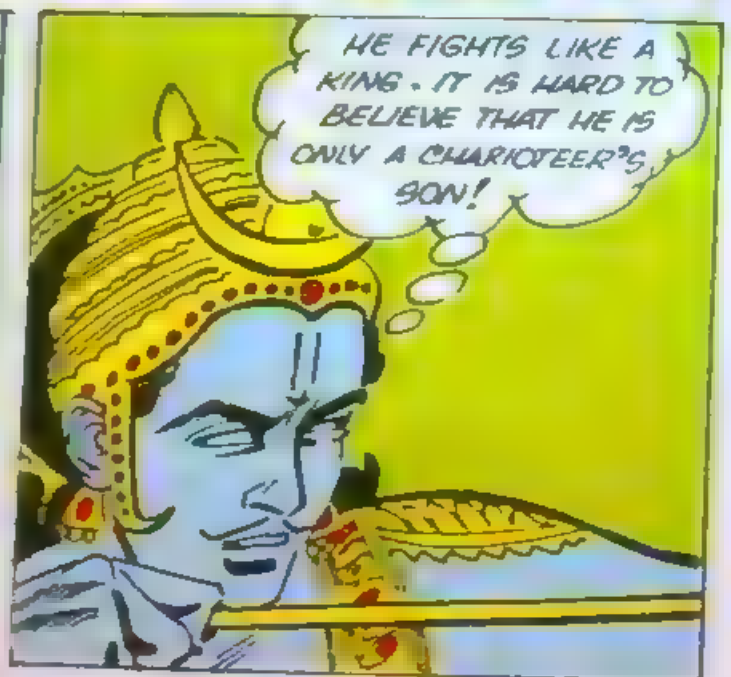
WHEN ARJUNA HEARD
OF YUDHISHTHIRA'S
HUMILIATION, HE COULD
NOT WAIT TO ATTACK
KARNA. HE SOON HAD
THE CHANCE.



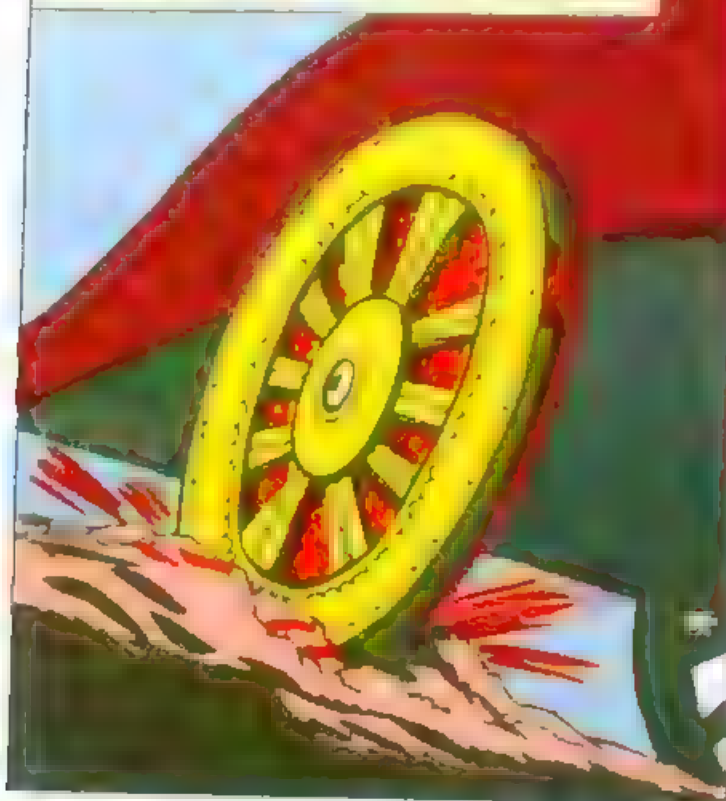
HOW WELL MY
BROTHER
WIELDS HIS
WEAPONS!



HE FIGHTS LIKE A
KING. IT IS HARD TO
BELIEVE THAT HE IS
ONLY A CHARIOTEER'S
SON!



AGAIN! FOR ARUNA THE END WAS
DRAWING NEAR. A WHEEL OF HIS
CARRIAGE RAN INTO THE GROUND



MY MEMORY FAILS ME.
I CANNOT RECALL THE
MANTRAS OF THE GREAT
PARASHURAMA!



WHILE HE JUMPED DOWN
AND TRIED TO DRAG IT
OUT. ARUNA WAS AT AN
ADVANTAGE. PARASHURAMA'S
CURSE HAD TAKEN EFFECT



WHEN KARNA WAS THUS HELPLESS, ARJUNA,
WITH KRISHNA'S PROMPTING . . .



.... SHOT AN ARROW THAT SEVERED THE HEAD
OF THE GREAT HERO FROM ITS BEAUTIFUL BODY.



THE CURSE OF THE BRAHMAN
HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN.

WHEN KUNTI HEARD OF KARNA'S DEATH —

DEAR, DEAR, SON!
I CAST YOU OFF AT BIRTH
AND YOUR DEATH I CAN
BUT LAMENT IN
PRIVATE.



AFTER THE BATTLE, THE VICTORIOUS PANDAVAS PERFORMED THE DEATH CEREMONIES FOR THE DEAD.

WILL I HAVE THE
COURAGE TO SEND
YOUR SOUL ON ITS
JOURNEY AS
BEFITS YOUR
BIRTH?



JUST AS YUDHISHTHIRA HAD ENDED
WITH THE LAST OFFERING TO
THEIR KINGMEN —

WAIT! THERE IS
ONE MORE
LEFT.

WHO IS IT
THAT I HAVE
FORGOTTEN?



KARNA!

BUT WHY
SHOULD I DO
IT FOR KARNA?
KARNA, OUR ARCH
ENEMY, KARNA THE
CHARIOTEER'S
SON!



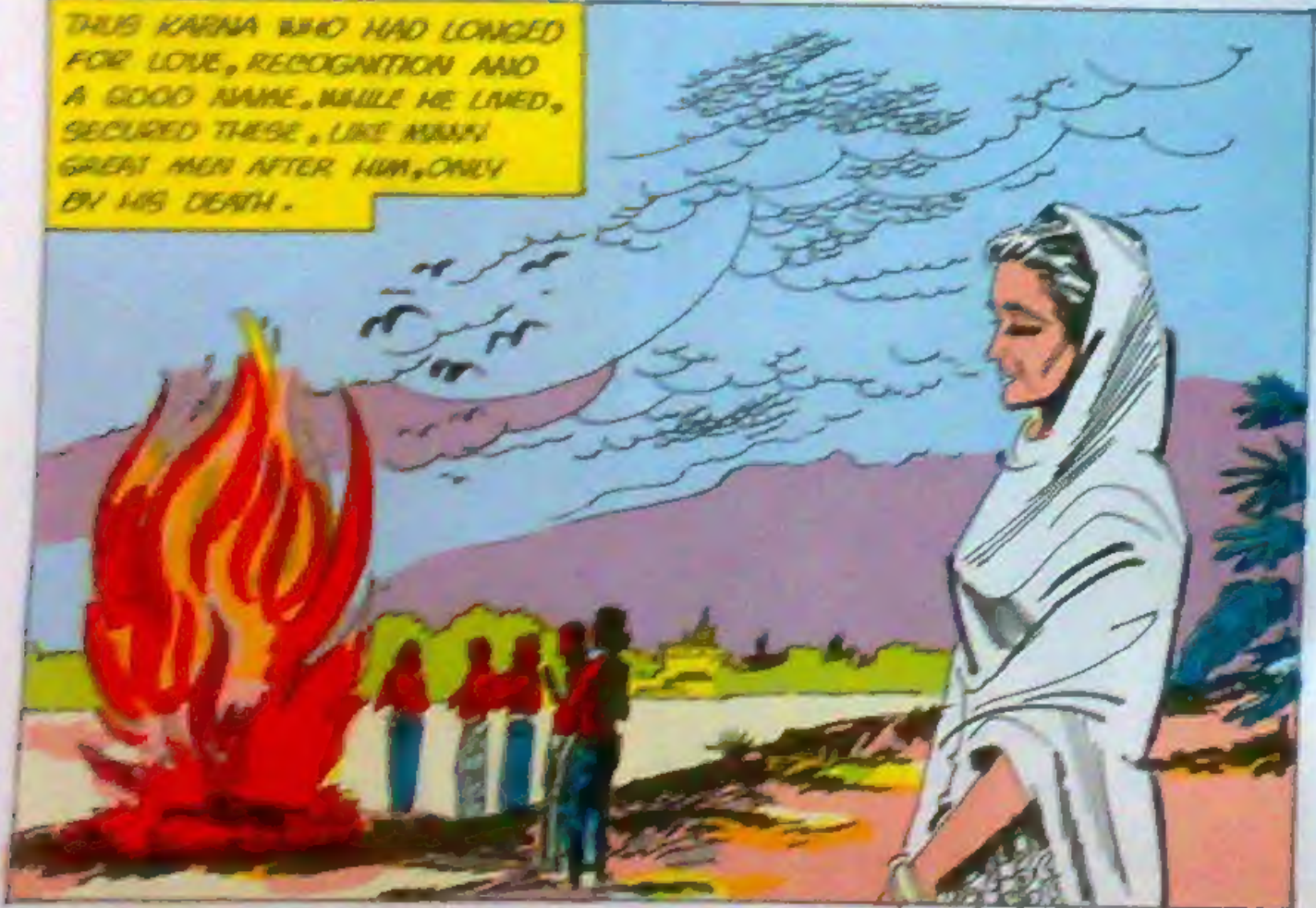
KUNTI THEN BROKE DOWN
AND TOLD HER TALE.



THE SUN SMILED. EACH OF THE
PANDAVAS REMEMBERED HIS
OWN ENCOUNTER WITH THE
DEAD BROTHER AND THEIR
HEARTS REACHED OUT TO HIM.



THUS KARNA WHO HAD LONGED
FOR LOVE, RECOGNITION AND
A GOOD NAME, WHILE HE LIVED,
SECURED THESE, LIKE MANY
GREAT MEN AFTER HIM, ONLY
BY HIS DEATH.



THE MANY MICAVENTURES OF MONTU, THE MAHAKID



Win exciting prizes!



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Send in your entries by illustrating the rest of the story in 4 panels and a separate sheet of paper with your name, age and address within 30 days. Exchange 10 Maha Lacto sachets along with your entries and enter in 'The Maha Lacto Memorial Contest'. 10 Maha Lacto Sachet, Gandhinagar, Chennai-600 020.



The best Lacto is here.